

THE EASTERN QUESTION

ASIA MINOR AND THE CAUCASUS

SIR RANDAL ROBERTS BART

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THE EASTERN QUESTION.

ASIA MINOR

AND

THE CAUCASUS.

BY

SIR RANDAL ROBERTS,

AUTHOR OF "MODERN WAR," "THE FELLAH," ETC.

With Maps.



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PREFACE.

THE object of this pamphlet is to give to the reader a descriptive and discursive account of Asia Minor and the Caucasus, avoiding as much as possible dry and uninteresting details. The matter contained in these pages is the result of some little personal experience, and information gained during a sojourn in the districts of which they treat. I trust it may also prove useful in affording information, topographical and otherwise, to the reader, from which he may gain some superficial knowledge, at least, of a country where one of the greatest of modern European wars has commenced, and where the struggle is likely to be confined, as regards

Asia Minor, almost entirely to the two nations engaged. In Chap. III., upon the war, I have freely used my contributions to "The Boston Daily Advertiser."

R. H. ROBERTS.

Boston, July 26, 1877.

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MAP OF
ASIA MINOR
AND THE
CAUCASUS.

New Administrative Divisions
of the Caucasus

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5 ERIVAN	

ASIA MINOR AND THE CAUCASUS.

I.

THE CITIES OF ASIA MINOR.

UNTIL the trumpet of war had sounded on the Pruth, Asiatic Turkey, or, more properly speaking, Asia Minor, held but little interest in the mind of the general American public. It was a far-off land, rude in its proclivities, peopled by semi-barbarous tribes, full of strange customs both of laws and religion, and generally unknown. But no sooner had war been declared, and the Russian commander-in-chief in Asia crossed the rugged boundary which separates the dominions of the sultan from those of the czar, than people anxiously asked what manner of country this was, and wondered that they had heard and knew so little about it.

Asia Minor, or the dominions of the sultan in Northern Asia, may be said to extend from Bataum on the east to Scutari on the west, the Black Sea forming a northern boundary. Then, taking Trebizond as a northerly point, and the one from which we shall start upon our tour of description, it extends in a south-easterly direction to Mount Ararat, at which point the frontiers of three kingdoms converge, — viz., Turkey, Russia, and Persia, — and in a due southerly direction until the frontier is met by the arid plains of Arabia Petræa. Thus we have the length and breadth of the Turkish territory in Asia Minor, including Syria.

The country surrounding Mount Ararat is renowned in ancient history for the fierce incursions of the Kurds and other tribes who used to lay waste all that portion, down even to the low lands watered by that mighty river the Shat-al-Arab, formed by the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates. It was not, indeed, until the year 1842, that the boundaries of Turkey, Russia, and Persia were accurately defined, and a stop put to the wholesale massacre of defenceless villagers and the destruction of flocks and herds. These

boundaries were determined at Erzeroum, by delegates from the three above-named countries, and one from England, who at the same time drew up a treaty of peace, which was not finally signed until the year 1847. At this period but little was known of the hitherto unexplored sections watered by the Tigris ; and it was not until 1848, when an expedition started from Bagdad, that the vast regions to the east of Mesopotamia were opened up, and a knowledge of the Chaldæan, Nestorian, and Maronite churches, who date their origin from the early days of the apostles, were discovered.

Turkey in Asia may be divided into six grand divisions ; viz., Anadolia, Karamania, Roum or Sivas, Marash, Syria, and Bagdad.

The north-eastern portion of Turkey in Asia, once known under the name of Armenia, has like Poland been split up into "Pachalics" or Eyalets, and appropriated by Russia, Persia, and Turkey, without consideration. Of these Pachalics, Trebizond, Erzeroum, Diarbekir, Kars, Bayazid, Marash, and Mosul are under the sway of the Sultan.

These Pachalics, as nearest to the Russian

frontier, like the Moldo-Wallachian provinces in Europe, have always been a scene of bloodshed and rapine whenever Turkey and Russia have gone to war ; and it is in these Pachalics that public interest is centred at this moment.

Trebizond, the most important Turkish seaport on the Fena Kara Degniz, or the "Bad Black Sea," is the capital of the Pachalic from which it takes its name. As you approach Trebizond from the sea, the scenery on the Asiatic coast is grand in the extreme. Precipitous cliffs meet the waves of the Black Sea, whose spray is dashed against their sides to an immense height. Farther inland lofty ranges of mountains tower to the skies in rugged magnificence. These hills are rich in bituminous coal, but with one exception, that of Ergalè, their resources are left idle, although English coal is imported to Constantinople, where it costs a fabulous price. It is surprising that with this mine of wealth at their feet the Turks permit the precious mineral to remain undeveloped ; but the Turkish character is a jealous one, and they would rather sustain a heavy loss than permit foreigners to develop that which they are too lazy to do themselves.

Stretching away to the westward as far as Sinope are vast forests of immense trees, such as one would have little conception of. These forests are the home of the stag and the wild boar: the latter, from his sacred character, remains unmolested. To the east the great chain of the Circassian Mountains come into view in all their grandeur.

The appearance of Trebizond is exceedingly imposing. The town is built upon a flat table-land, from which situation it takes its name, the old name, originating from the Greek, being *τραπέζα*, or table. There is no harbor, the coast being perfectly open; but the anchorage is good, and several jetties have been run out for the protection of ships. It is from Trebizond that most of the manufactured goods from Europe find their way into Central Asia, especially Manchester stuffs; so large indeed is the trade that the imports for one year alone have been computed at £2,100,000 sterling or thereabouts. Like most Oriental cities, so it is with Trebizond; no sooner one land than the picture vanishes. The streets are narrow, execrably paved, and filthily dirty. The houses, covered with fig-trees, or

hidden under the branches of orange and lemon trees, present blank walls to the streets. There is plenty of life and bustle in the bazaars, which contain an immense quantity of rubbish of all sorts. Old matchlocks, fruit, country cheeses, saddlery and harness, which latter must have been handed down from the time of the Milesians when they first colonized this portion of the coast, Turkish fez, slippers and pipes innumerable, seem to be the staple commodities. Here, too, one sees a fair specimen of the old Turkish merchant, seated before his stall, cross-legged and beturbaned, with the everlasting hookah in his mouth. Osmanlis, Greeks, Armenians, and a few Circassians, compose the population; of these the Osmanlis are the most numerous, and reside within the walls, whilst the remainder inhabit the suburbs. Trebizond is well worth inspection, if it is only for the sake of the monuments of the past which it possesses. Here are to be seen many records of the grandeur of the old Byzantine Empire in the shape of frescoes, some of which are well preserved. In a Greek church there is an old monument, bearing an inscription which tells you that this is the tomb

of Solomon, son of David and king of Georgia and Imeritia. These two provinces are now in Russian hands, and lie to the south of the Caucasus, between them and the Turkish frontier. The citadel of Trebizond and the church of St. Sophia are the two points most worthy of interest. The former is of course Byzantine: the latter dates from a more recent period, but still very old.

It is quite impossible to defend Trebizond, either by land or sea, in consequence of the nature of the country, and the open and exposed coast; so that, should the Russians succeed in taking Erzeroum, Trebizond is entirely at their mercy. At the same time the difficulty of advancing along the tracks which they are pleased to call roads through this mountainous country is indeed immense, often taking a week to accomplish.

The journey from Trebizond to Erzeroum is an undertaking not only of fatigue, but of absolute danger; for the road runs but too often along the brink of a fearful precipice, without the protection even of a rail fence or low stone wall of any kind, so that a false step may dash

the unwary traveller to pieces on the rocks hundreds of feet below him. There are but two inns in Trebizond, and these of a very inferior description. The cooking is none of the best or of the cleanest ; and the beds are capable of much improvement in many ways. Excellent fish is, however, procurable ; and amongst the various species there is the delicious red mullet, the woodcock of the sea, which is caught here in large quantities.

The next place of importance requiring our attention is the city of Erzeroum, the ancient capital of Armenia, distant from Trebizond one hundred and eighty miles. It has been said with much truth, that Erzeroum is the key to Asia Minor. The town, from its situation, is not only the centre of commerce, and a *dépôt* for all sorts of provisions and merchandise ; but all the main roads from Batoum and Trebizond on the north, Kars on the east, Diarbekr and Van on the south, and Erseziann and Tokat on the west, find a centre in Erzeroum. It is situated on a large plain, surrounded on all sides by high mountains ; amongst the highest being that of the *Devè Dag*, or Camel Mountain. The summits

of most of these mountains are covered with perpetual snow.

The plain of Erzeroum lies at a height of seven thousand feet above the level of the sea ; and the city contains to-day from thirty to thirty-five thousand inhabitants. The old town of Erzeroum is nearly square, surrounded by a thick but crumbling wall flanked by watch-towers, and retaining many attributes of its Byzantine origin. There is nothing very striking in its architecture beyond the peculiarity of the manner in which the houses are built.

The severity of the winter in this part of Asia Minor has suggested the mode of architecture ; and the natural laziness of the Turk has never made any alteration in a method adopted by an old and effete generation. When the British commissioner visited Erzeroum on the mission already alluded to, — viz., the drawing-up of a treaty of peace, and the settling of the boundary-line, — he gave the following description ; it is one I can vouch for as being at any rate literally true, and will give the reader an idea of the manner in which houses are built in this Asiatic portion of the sultan's dominions : —

“Our house, like most of the others, was built with great solidity, of rough stone, with large blocks at the corners. The roof was flat, and covered with green turf. The windows were small, like port-holes ; but the door was a large arch, through which we rode into the gloomy, sepulchral-looking hall, out of which opened the stables on the right hand, the kitchen and offices and some other rooms on the left, while in front a dark staircase of square stones and heavy beams looked as if it had tumbled through the ceiling, and gave access to the upper floor. There was a little garden, or yard, under the windows, where we planted vegetables, and in one part of which several English dogs, two Persian greyhounds, and an Armenian turnspit, walked about in the daytime. The railing between this and the garden part of the yard was a triumph of art, accomplished by a Turkish guard who turned his sword into a ploughshare when not wanted to look terrific. We had also nineteen lambs : these grazed on the top of the highest part of the house, where they were carried up every morning, except occasionally when there was such a wind that they would be in danger

of being blown away. We had I know not how many sheep with large tails: these took a walk every day with a shepherd, who led out all the sheep belonging to the inhabitants of that part of the town. Every house having a few, they are marked; and all come home every evening to their respective houses, and go out again the next morning, and eat what they can get upon the mountains.

“All the building, except the hall and stable, had a garden on the roof, that part only being two stories high. The kitchen and some of the other rooms were lit by a skylight, the earth at the back of them being on a level with their ceilings. The walls of the upper floor were not exactly over those below, but were supported by immense beams, some of which had given way, and the principal room leaned over to the left frightfully. Those rooms which are lit by windows have two rows of them, one above the other, except the dining-room and ante-room, which had only one row, too high from the floor to look out of, but very convenient for looking into from the upper garden and the terrace of the next house. The rooms had all whitewashed

walls, wooden flat ceilings, curiously carved and painted. On the floors there was blue cloth instead of carpets, and divans of red cloth. A few chairs and some lumbering deal tables with covers on them conclude our list of furniture and 'genuine effects.'"

Such, then, may be taken as a general description of the houses to be found in this section of Asia Minor, although the country houses differ somewhat in detail. They are constructed in the following manner: A space of ground is marked out, perhaps nearly an English acre in extent; then the whole space is excavated to the depth of about five feet. One part of the excavation is set apart for the great cow-stable; this may be fifty or one hundred feet long, and nearly as wide. Having got so far, some trees are the next requisite; these trees being cut down, the trunks are chopped into lengths of eight or nine feet, the general height of the rooms, and are placed in two or four rows, to be used as columns down the great stable. The larger branches, without being squared or shaped, are laid across from pillar to pillar, as beams; the smaller branches are laid across these, the

twigs on the top, till the entire trees are used up. The twigs are sometimes tied up in fagots, sometimes not. Over this is spread some of the earth that was excavated from below ; this is well trodden down, then more earth is added ; and on the top of all is laid the turf which formed the surface of the soil before it was moved. Round the stable, in no particular order, smaller rooms are formed ; if they are large, their roofs are supported by columns like the stable. In a large house there are often two stables.

The space of ground taken up by a rich man's house is prodigious, the turfed roof forming a small field. The lesser rooms in this subterranean habitation are divided from the stable and from each other by rough stone walls well filled up with clay or mud. Their ceilings are contrived by laying beams across each other, two along and two across, in the form of a low pyramid, so that the ceiling is a kind of low, irregular dome. The smaller rooms form storerooms, and apartments for the women. Each room has a rough stone fireplace opposite the door ; and in the roof, generally over the door, there is one window about eighteen inches square, glazed with

a piece of oiled paper. Outside, these windows look like large molehills, with a bit of plaster on one side surrounding the oiled paper, or glass, which transmits the light. Inside, the window is perceived at the end of a funnel, widening greatly toward the room, and contrived so as to throw the light to the centre of the apartment, opposite the fireplace, where a fire of *tezek*, or dried cow-dung and chopped straw, is constantly smouldering. Over the chimney-piece hangs an iron lamp of simple construction, which, with the help of the fire, produces a dim light in the long nights of winter. There is a divan, usually covered with most beautiful Koordish carpets, which last forever, on each side of the fireplace; and large wooden pegs, projecting from the walls, serve to hang up guns, pistols, cloaks, and any thing else. Some of these rooms are rather roughly pretty in appearance; the floors are covered with *tekkè*, a thick gray felt; and, among smart people, Persian carpets are laid over the felt, their beautiful colors producing a rich and comfortable effect. About half way up the chimney is a wooden door, or damper, which is opened and shut by means of a string; and when it is very cold weather,

and they want to be snug and fusty down below, this door is shut, and the room becomes as hot as an oven. The chimney does not rise more than two feet above ground, and has a large flat stone on the top to keep the snow from falling in, as well as the lambs and children: the smoke escapes by apertures on the sides just below the coping-stone. The chimneys look like toad-stools from the outside, rising a little above the snow or the grass which grows upon the roof.

These subterranean habitations are constructed, not on the side of a hill, but on the side of a gentle slope; and all the earth excavated for the house is thrown back again upon the roof in such a manner that on three sides there is often no sign of any dwelling existing underneath. The entrance is on the lower side of the slope; and there the mound is often visible, as it is raised four or five feet above the level of the hill-side. There are no fences to keep people off the roof, which has no appearance different from the rest of the country.

The most curious and remarkable part of the house is the great ox-stable, which often holds some scores of cattle. Out of this stable they

do not stir, frequently, during the whole winter season ; and it is the breath and heat of these animals which warm the house, in addition to which, they supply all the fuel for the establishment. They are fed upon straw bruised to small bits by the sledge, which is driven round the threshing-floor to separate the corn from the husk after harvest-time. In one corner of this huge, dim stable, near the entrance door, a wooden platform is raised three feet from the ground ; two sides of it are bounded by the stone wall of the house, in one of which, opposite the door, is the fireplace ; the other two sides of the square platform have open wooden rails to keep off the cows. This original contrivance is the Salemlik, or reception-room, where the master sits, and where he entertains his guests, who, as they stumble into the obscure den from the glare of the sun shining on the snow outside, are received with a yell by all the dogs, who live under the platform.

This place is fitted up with divans and carpets ; arms and saddles hang against the walls ; the horses of the chief are tethered nearest to the rails, the donkeys and cows farther off. Among the horses there is always an immense

fat, tame sheep: this is a universal custom in every stable in Turkey, under or above ground. A small flock of other sheep are sometimes scampering about, or kept from doing so, among the cows; chickens pick in the litter; and several grave cats have their allotted places on the divans of the chief, his wife, and others of his family.

A vacant — that is, cowless — space is left between the steps leading up to the platform, and the entrance-door of the house. This part answers to the entrance-hall, as man and beast pass through it in coming in or going out, immediately before the eyes of the master of the house. From hence a sloping passage, about six feet wide, leads to the open air; it has an outer door at the upper end, and an inner door below; this passage may be from ten to twenty feet long. The outer door is a common, strong, wooden one; but the inner doors all over the house are as singular as the rest of the arrangements. The house door is of the usual size for the cows and horses to pass through; the others are not more than five feet high. They are constructed in the following manner: the bare wooden valve is first

covered with ketché or felt ; and on the inside the skin of a sheep, with its legs on, just in the shape in which it came off the animal when it was skinned, being dyed red, is nailed over the felt. On the other side of the door, down the middle, is a long, square pipe, or hose, in which hangs a heavy log of wood, attached to a cord fixed to the upper part of the door-case, which keeps the door shut as it swings to again after it has been opened, keeping out the draughts, and keeping in the warm air generated by cows, fires, and lamps ; so that the atmosphere is always temperate within, while the cold is such without that men are frozen to death if they stand still even for a short time in the rigorous climate of an Armenian winter.

Such, then, is Erzeroum, as far as architecture is concerned. At the present moment it is a dépôt where the Bashi-bazouks, the Kurds, and Turcomans come for arms : it is the granary for Mukhtar Pacha's army. Although Erzeroum is but one hundred and eighty miles from Trebizond, yet it takes four days to reach it, travelling on horseback, that is, when the roads are in perfect order. Troops would certainly take two

weeks ; whilst how the heavy Krupp guns now lying at Trebizond are to be transported to Erzeroum, is an enigma which we cannot solve.

There are three distinct roads to Erzeroum from Trebizond, but there is only one available in the summer season ; the others are rendered impassable from the melting of the snow. This road and the one now in use passes through the valley of the Deirmè Derè and the Charseput, and through the pass of Kolat and the Kittou mountain. The peculiar nature of the country would render these roads easily defensible by a body of guerillas, and make the advance of any organized body of troops, especially if accompanied by artillery, almost impossible. As to cavalry, in such a country they are worse than useless, and would have to advance in single file.

The approach to Erzeroum is protected by the fortified positions of Hasan, Kaleh, and Koprikoi, which bar the advance of an enemy from the east, whilst the strong position of Zevin on the Soghanli range stops any movement from the north.

Next in importance to Erzeroum, and, so to

speaking, its advanced work, comes the little town but strong fortress of Kars, made ever memorable in the annals of history from its heroic defence by Sir Fenwick Williams against Gen. Mouravieff in 1852-53.

The distance from Kars to Erzeroum is one hundred and twenty miles, and from Kars to the frontier is about thirty more. The town of Kars, situated on the river Karschai, is important only from the strategic position which it occupies. It was first built by the Genoese, who constructed a castle on the summit of the eminence which is to-day crowned by its ruins. At the foot of this eminence, the little town of fifteen thousand inhabitants is built. The population consists principally of Greeks and Armenians, with a few Osmanlis. Kars was originally the capital of a petty Armenian kingdom, but is now formed into a pachalik of that name.

The fortress of Kars occupies relatively the same position in Turkey in Asia to that of Shumla in European Turkey. As Varna, Rustchuk, and Shumla are the keys to Turkey in Europe, so Trebizond, Kars, and Erzeroum may be said to be those of Turkey in Asia. The

wild sensational news so freely published by the press in the early part of the war, as to the fall of Kars some time ago, must have been a matter of considerable amazement to those acquainted with its position and defences, and can only have emanated from some holder of Russian stock desirous of spreading so good a *canard* amongst an all-believing public. Had such an event taken place, the campaign in Asia Minor would to all intents and purposes have been ended. But a place that held out in 1852-53 for five months, when defended by seventeen thousand men and forty-two guns, is not likely to be taken by assault or *coup de main*, especially when garrisoned by more than double that amount both of men and guns. Nature has done much to strengthen Kars in the way of defence ; for, since the day when field artillery came into action at two thousand yards, the old system of fortifications are things of the past, and Vauban and his school have died a natural death. Nowadays cities are defended by works at a distance ; and this is notably the case with Kars. The exact extent of the earthworks which cover Kars occupies an area of about ten square

English miles, and they are for the most part placed on the eminences which nature has provided for its protection. On the east is the mighty mountain of the Karadagh, which overlooks every other for miles, whilst on the west and north Kars is shut in by another range of hills called the Tahmasp. The south is protected by the river and a large intrenched camp, of which we shall speak presently. From the Karadagh battery to the Tahmasp battery is a distance of about four miles ; whilst from the Telek tabia to the southernmost portion of the intrenched camp is about five miles. It will here be necessary to explain that the word "tabia" is the Turkish for "earthwork" or "field-work;" and that, when these forts were built, they were named by the Turks after various favorite commanders. Of the fortifications erected by Gen. Williams, those of the Karadagh and the Tahmasp are all that remain ; but these have been strengthened, and, what is of great importance, supplied with Krupp guns. The work of the Karadagh mounts forty guns, and commands all the others.

It is a redoubt with bastions, and communi-

cates by a covered way with Arab tabia, a strong closed redoubt upon the northern spur of the Karadagh. The batteries of the Tahmasp, which is in itself a mamelon or rounded hill, are open redans communicating with one another until the north spur of the range is occupied by the Telek tabia, a closed redoubt of great strength. In addition to these defences there is an inner line of redoubts and earth-works situated on the north side of the river Karschai and between the town and the Tahmasp. To the south, on a fine open plain, there is an intrenched camp about a mile and a half square: this intrenched camp is protected by five redans and two redoubts. In all, Kars, irrespective of its inner defences, is protected by thirty works of various sizes, mounting some three hundred guns. If Kars is supplied with provisions, as no doubt it is, it will certainly take the Russian army the whole of the summer and fall to reduce it by siege, which, unless some dire calamity happens, is the only way it can be taken. Mukhtar Pacha has thirty-five thousand well-disciplined men in Kars; and we know from experience how the Turks can fight behind earth-works. He has also three other armies in the

field, which have, since the commencement of the war, been re-enforced by forty thousand fresh troops ready to co-operate. Krupp guns have been landed at Trebizond, together with other munitions of war; so that Kars is in a most complete state of defence.

We have now enumerated the principal cities of interest with which the reader is brought into contact every day. When we have described one we have described all; for the cities of Asia Minor differ but little from one another, either in architecture, manners, or population.

II.

TOPOGRAPHICAL AND SOCIAL.

By drawing a straight line from the Cape of Sinope due south, it will be found that nature has divided Asia Minor into two distinct topographical divisions. The country to the east of this line is composed of continuous ranges of high mountains, at whose base flow many small streams. Most of these ranges as they approach the plains of Georgia are crowned with eternal snow ; and we may therefore with strict justness term this section the Highlands of Asia Minor. This mountainous district, however, abruptly terminates at this imaginary line ; and the country beyond becomes pastoral, cultivated, and undulating till it reaches the western shores washed by the waves of the Mediterranean.

The natural barrier against Russia formed by this mountainous district may be said to commence at Batoum, a small seaport on the Black Sea, situated at the mouth of the river Tscha-

ruk. This barrier consists of a range of mountains running in a south-easterly direction until they unite with the main range of the Caucasus to the south-east of Tiflis in the Kura valley. Distributed along this mountain barrier are the Russian fortresses of Akhalzick, Alexandropol, and Erivan ; against which, on the Turkish side, are found Batoum, Ardahan, Kars, and Bayazid.

There are but four practical passes by which Turkish territory can be entered from Russian. The first is that of the Ulgar pass, on the direct road from Ardahan to Akhalzick. In winter this pass is not only dangerous from avalanches, but almost impassable from the depth to which it is covered by the snow. Just between Digwin and Zauramal, the scene is indescribably grand. Huge trap-rocks are piled one upon another to an enormous height ; dark pine woods peep out, looking like trees of ink against the gray background ; here and there a luxuriant spot, green with verdure, and fringed with the foliage of the vine, the olive, and the almond, relieves the stern character of the landscape. Flocks of sheep and goats look like tiny specks above as you pass along the road cut in the side of this

almost natural culvert. This district is watered by the river Tscharuk.

The second pass is that of Akalkalokha, over the Gegh Dagh, which is on the main road from Tiflis, passing the small mountain lakes of Waspellu and Sursuno. From the latter rises the Arras river, which waters the plains of Erivan, and marks the north-eastern boundary of Persia. This pass is also one of great difficulty, especially during the spring months and up to August, from the snow, melting on the tops of the mountains, which forms innumerable rivers: these, as they reach their base, increase in volume until they become roaring rivers, boiling and seething through the valleys beneath.

The next and most important pass is that of Bandis. This is on the main road from Alexandropol to Kars, through the valley of the Kar-schai, and is practical at all times of the year. And lastly comes the road across Mount Ararat, through the Karatschli pass. There is also a fair road from Erivan through Kagisman and still farther south at Karakallissa. We may therefore assume that the chain of Ararat on the south, and that of Allaghez on the north, separate Russia from Turkey in Asia.

This vast mountainous region is watered by no less than six rivers, more or less important in size ; the Kara Su, or, more properly speaking, the head waters of the Euphrates, the Tcharuk, the Karschai, the Kur, the Murad, and the Araxes, — besides innumerable smaller streams, tributaries of the above-mentioned rivers. The pachalik of Bayazid is the least mountainous portion of this district ; and it is on account of this, no doubt, that it was first seized and occupied by the Russians, who at once assumed the control of the whole of this province.

From the chains of the Allaghes and Ararat numerous spurs spring out, forming the Barschal, Soghanly, Gedik, Kosch, and Allah Dag ranges, almost all of them running in a north-easterly and south-westerly direction. To the west of Erzeroum these mountains gradually decrease in magnitude, until they are finally lost in the limestone hills of Sivas and Tokat, the Ak Dag being the last of the chain.

Many portions of this country are clothed with enormous forests of oak and pine, especially the Soghanly range, where Mukhtar Pacha's headquarters have been situated. The rest of the

country may be said to have for its distinctive features rugged mountainous ranges, crossed by difficult and sometimes impassable roads ; rocky valleys, intersected by huge marshes and rivers, which are impossible to cross at certain seasons of the year.

The whole of this district seems to be volcanic ; and many valuable mines of coal, iron-stone, silver, and other minerals are to be found amongst the mountains, more especially in the northern portion.

The western part of Asia Minor presents a totally different aspect. Here the landscape is pastoral and undulating, and the plains are richly watered by the Kyrsal Irmak, which rises to the east of Sivas, and, after flowing in a southerly direction, makes an abrupt bend to the north, falling into the sea in the Bight of Biafra.

The Filias, Sakaria, Kugez, Mendere, and Sarabat rivers also flow through the rich and verdant plains whose seacoasts are washed by the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmora, and the Mediterranean.

Anadolia is one of the most fertile provinces of Asia Minor : besides its agriculture, it pos-

sesses silver and other mines, and large marble-quarries. If this country were developed by a railroad from Scutari, running through Ismid, Enguire, and on to Tokat, a perfectly easy thing to do from the few engineering obstacles to contend against, the richness of the country would be increased, agriculture would be improved, vast mines of mineral wealth would be developed, and a new people would soon take the place of an almost semi-barbarous race. The coast on the Grecian Archipelago is a particularly productive one, to say nothing of the numerous and commodious harbors which occur from the straits of Gallipoli southward to the Syrian coast.

Of the cities that cover this magnificent country, Tokat, Sivas, Kastamuni, Eugurie, Konia, Brussa, and Smyrna are the most important.

Tokat contains a population of some one hundred thousand souls, and is surrounded on three sides by limestone hills. Its site is marked by two gigantic peaks of crystalline marble, which glitter like diamonds when lit up by the rays of the summer sun. The architecture of the town is very uninteresting, the houses being built of mud or unburned bricks. There are a few old

Armenian churches which are well worthy of inspection, though more for their antiquity than any thing else. The principal manufactures consist of silk, woollen, and cotton goods ; also carpets, together with copper and hardware. There are also several calico-printing establishments. The roads are moderately good, and during the summer season they are easily traversed ; but in the rainy season and during the winter months they are almost impassable.

We have now given a general idea of the topographical features of the country, together with a description of the principal cities. It will now be necessary to devote a few pages to the inhabitants who populate this vast continent.

Used as a general term, the name Osmanli is but too often a misnomer. If any have a right to that appellation, assuredly it is the Turks of Asia Minor. The term Osmanli no doubt originated at first with the small tribe of that name, who, like others of a like epoch, came from Central Asia. In course of time and by the absorption of the surrounding tribes, these Osmanlis became a great nation ; and let us here remark that all trace of these previous

tribes of Asia Minor who originally inhabited the country are absorbed or lost in the mists of antiquity. All that is left of them is represented by the Armenians, Kurds, Turkomans, and Arabs, together with here and there a Tartar. As we have said, the term Osmanli is certainly more applicable to the Turks who inhabit Asia Minor than to those of European Turkey ; for in Asia Minor we find the true descendant of the original tribe, with all the characteristics which have been faithfully preserved, whilst the Turk of Europe is another being altogether, in habits, manners, and disposition.

In the earlier times Asia Minor was composed of rich and populous kingdoms ; but now it is not only one of the least cultivated, but one of the least populated, portions of the globe. The population of Asia Minor may be said to be composed of Osmanlis or Turks, Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, with the Kurds and Turkomans, which latter people inhabit the south-east portion of Asia Minor on the confines of Persia. Of these the Turks and Armenians are the most, the Greeks (with the exception of the islands on the Archipelago) and the Jews the least numerous.

It is generally supposed that the Turk is ignorant, overbearing, and brutal. This is not so, especially as regards the Asiatic Turk. Of the higher officials and nobles of Turkey much in their favor cannot be said, either in Europe or Asia Minor, since lying is looked upon as diplomacy, and thieving as the perquisites of office ; but the mass of the population (we are now alluding to the Turks) are quiet, harmless, patient, and as well-behaved as the form of government under which they live permits. The greater portion of the country being pasture, the Turkish husbandman is not a very hard-working man. The small patches of cultivation which supply the necessities of life are rudely worked, and the crops are for the most part raised in a very primitive manner. As a rule the Turkish peasant is honest, sober, and very patient. He is a strict observer of religious forms, and is particular about conforming to the minutest letter of the law. Your true Asiatic Turk is, of course, a fatalist to the last degree ; and it is this firm belief that carries him through all dangers and difficulties with an apparently calm and undisturbed exterior. It is a remarkable fact that in

the Turkish villages of Asia Minor there are very few old men or old women to be seen.

The higher class of Turk is to be least admired. As a rule he is lazy, arrogant, cruel, and overbearing, although he is generally brave and hospitable. Your Asiatic pacha is a stern observer of Oriental etiquette; and the same ceremonies and forms are gone through to-day upon the introduction of a stranger as were the custom a hundred years ago. The first time we were brought into contact with a pacha in Asia Minor was at Erzeroum, and is still vividly impressed upon our memory. It was intimated to us, upon our arrival, that at a certain hour his Excellency would be pleased to receive us. Accordingly, at the appointed time we found ourselves in a spacious court-yard, surrounded on three sides by tumble-down, half-ruinous looking sheds, out of which men and children were gazing with wonder upon the Giaour, whilst closely veiled women peered over their shoulders. We were received by a guard of Kawasses, — wild-looking fellows in tattered and nondescript uniforms, — and ushered up a rickety old staircase into the *selamlık*, or audience-chamber. The room was

covered by a bright Persian carpet, and surrounded on all sides by divans or ottomans of cherry-colored silk.

Seated at one end of the room, on a divan slightly raised above the rest, appeared to be what we took for a huge bundle of white muslin with a red turban placed upon the summit ; but, as we advanced into the centre of the room, the bundle suddenly became animated, and upon assuming an erect position proved to be his Excellency Selim Effendi, governor of the pachalik of Erzeroum. All that was visible was a dark face covered by a huge black beard, and two small piercing eyes ; as to the form, whether it was clothes or whether it was obesity, we certainly never beheld so short and so stout a specimen of human nature.

Through the aid of an interpreter, the usual formalities which Turkish etiquette requires were gone through ; viz., we first of all asked after one another's health, and were very particular and minute in these inquiries. At each question we bowed mechanically, and did the same at each answer. We then seated ourselves upon the divans, and drank coffee, smoking therewith

fragrant chibouks. To do honor to our visit, two other pachas had been invited to meet us, next to one of whom we sat. Occasionally Selim Effendi would speak in a deep bass voice, which we afterwards ascertained is considered the correct intonation to use for all people of dignity or quality. But the conversation was entirely confined to his Excellency, it not being etiquette for the guests to speak unless asked to do so. We were handed a chibouk with a most magnificent mouthpiece of amber, set with diamonds and turquoises of great value ; and so beautiful was the bauble, that we could not refrain from expressing admiration ; upon which the interpreter informed us that his Excellency would look upon it as a favor if we would keep the pipe as a reminiscence of our visit to Erzeroum. Unfortunately the British minister had strictly prohibited any English officer from accepting presents from Turkish officials : we were therefore compelled, though most unwillingly, to refuse, at the same time expressing our chagrin ; when, to our utter astonishment, the pacha on our left whispered under his beard, and in the strongest of brogues, " Put it in yer pocket, ye omadauhn,"

and then, with a finger on his lips, cautioned us to silence. We ascertained afterwards that he was a native of the county of Limerick, but had been in the service of the sultan for some twenty-five years.

A visit is closed with the same formalities with which it is opened ; and each succeeding visit is but a repetition of those ceremonies which have been in vogue from almost time immemorial.

Your Turkish gentleman of Asia Minor has no pursuits of any kind : indeed, how he spends his life is almost a mystery. Some are fond of shooting at a mark ; but of this we only saw one instance during the whole of our sojourn. They neither hunt, shoot, nor fish. They seldom read, and rarely take exercise except in time of war. It is therefore not surprising that the race of the Osmanli has degenerated.

But, whatever of energy is lacking in the Turkish character, it is fully made up by that of the Armenian portion of the population. Ever since the conquest of this portion of Asia Minor by the Turks, the Armenians have been the merchants, the bankers, the clerks, and the manufacturers, of Asiatic Turkey. They have

strictly preserved their religion; and, although under Turkish rule, they have preserved their nationality intact. They have to compete in many instances against the Greeks, of whom we shall presently speak; but, of the two nations, the Armenians are certainly more to be liked than the representatives of the Hellenic kingdom. Although some time ago a move was made in Constantinople by some prominent Armenian gentlemen who held high office under the Turkish government, that their nationality should be more recognized, and that certain privileges might be granted to them, the movement was quickly suppressed; and they were given to understand that no such thing could be tolerated. Since then they appear to have quietly accepted their position; although we are inclined to think that, if the Armenian population and influence in Asia Minor were stirred up to an aggressive policy, their numbers and riches would secure for them much which they are now denied.

The better or upper classes of Armenians affect a European more than an Oriental mode of life; and almost every Armenian gentleman is well educated and well read. Much has been

written and told of the beauty of Armenian women, in which we readily concur ; an opinion that, no doubt, will be shared by our reader as he peruses the following description of a lady of Erzeroum.

She was in age perhaps nineteen or twenty, and in figure not tall ; but the beauty of her exquisite form was enhanced by an exceedingly juvenile and almost capricious vivacity of movement, which was quite charming ; especially when coupled with the coquettish gracefulness of the costume universally worn by Armenian, Greek, and Turkish women in Asia Minor. Over her *enteri*, or long robe of pink silk, fringed with gold embroidery, a lilac velvet jacket of the neatest possible shape, and also edged with gold, defined her symmetrical perfections ; while a tiny unshod foot peeped out on the sofa from the folds of her wide *shalvar* of black silk drawn tight round her ankle, and a pair of golden and scarlet slippers lay on the floor before her. A heavy Indian shawl encircled her waist ; a necklace of pearls hung round her neck ; and splendid diamonds enriched the pretty little red cap on her glossy mass of jet-black hair,

which was cut short in a fashion of recent introduction amongst her countrywomen. All this finery, probably donned in honor of a stranger, set off most admirably the Eastern cast of her beauty. Her face would have been a perfect model for a painter had it not partaken, in some measure, of the fatness of her race: but it was a very bewitching face all the same, so gay, so timid, and yet so proud; sometimes thoughtful, but always so engaging in feature and expression. An open forehead of brilliant placidity, large and full eyes of luminous clearness, possessing that vivid flame which is rarely seen but in children, and vouches for conscious innocence and candor within; a nose of aquiline mould, but delicate in the extreme, with purely chiselled and well-nigh transparent nostrils, the unerring test of quick mobility of feeling; and a small, well-shaped mouth that owed to the fineness of its outline the faculty of conveying, without the aid of words, the most varied and transient impressions, — gave to this daughter of Haïk an *ensemble* as striking as it was elevated in its character. Haïk was the descendant of Japhet, from whom the Armenian race are supposed to have sprung.

We have already described the dwellings of the lower classes, who are seldom employed except as husbandmen and laborers. The present war has, however, induced the Turkish government to raise an Armenian contingent; a great concession on their part, inasmuch as the old constitutional laws made the services of Christians prohibitory in the army.

Of the Jews residing in Asia Minor, exclusive of those inhabiting Syria, there is little to be said. As a rule, they are far from desirable acquaintances, although they are never molested by the Turks, who, on the contrary, protect them to their utmost. They have to a certain extent intermarried with the Armenians, Greeks, and Levantines, and cannot be said to be of pure race. As a rule they are grasping, cunning, treacherous, and exceedingly dirty in their habits; although many of them inhabiting the coast of the Archipelago are immensely rich.

The Turkomans, or that wild, nomadic tribe inhabiting the country round Lake Van and Diarbekr, although they own the sovereignty of the sultan, and are included amongst the Turkish subjects of Asia Minor, owe little allegiance to

him. They are divided into two distinct families, the *Kara Koyunli* and the *Ak Koyunli*, or black sheep and white sheep. The former occupy the district about Van, the latter, Diarbekr and its neighborhood. Still farther south, on the confines of Persia, is to be found the small tribe of the Afshars, who also belong to the Turkomans. It must be remembered that it is with this same tribe that the forefathers of the Ottomans came from Kohrasan in the eleventh century.

The Ottoman government has done every thing in its power to improve this semi-barbarous people, but without effect: on the contrary, the Turkomans look down with supreme contempt upon them, and consider that they have degenerated instead of advanced. The Osmanli when he migrated westward endeavored to improve and civilize himself; he gave up his habitation of goats' hair, and built unto himself a mansion of stone. Then came the intermixture with European society, the novelties of literature, and the wonders of art; and four centuries later the Turk became a civilized being in all but religion. Not so the Turkoman and the Kurd. Their home is still the steppe and the mountain-side;

their habitation is still the tent ; and the customs and traditions of four hundred years ago are still rigidly adhered to. The blood of this race has remained perfectly pure from its Tartar descent up to the present moment, whilst that of the Turk has been mixed with Sclavonians, Greeks, Circassians, and Georgians.

Rapine, plunder, and bloodshed are the principal occupation of these Asiatic freebooters. In time of war they are excellent allies, and act the part of irregular cavalry, surprising the enemy's convoys, hanging on his flank, harassing his rear-guard, or cutting off outposts, with all the intelligence and promptitude of the modern Uhlán. In time of peace, they are difficult to handle. Upon the slightest excuse, these dusky warriors assemble on their fiery little horses ; and with lance in hand, and matchlock on thigh, they steal upon some defenceless village, the first warning of their approach being the flames of the dwellings of the miserable inhabitants. Plunder is their watchword ; and it is on this they exist. They are splendid horsemen ; and, although their raids are much to be deplored, still some of them are not without a tinge of romance. For instance : —

“The young wife of Veli Bey, the chief of one of their tribes, was at Paska Kiu, a village held by the troops of the sultan. Dreading retaliation towards her for some of his acts of violence, the Bey applied for volunteers to rescue her under his guidance. Seven young men of the Afshar tribe at once volunteered. These entered the village at night, passed all the sentries, carried off the bey’s wife, and returned in safety to their camp.”

Again: “In the village of Kezeldji, a daughter of one of the located Turkomans had been forcibly married by the *muhtar* aga, or mayor. Four of her relatives went to his house in open daylight, cut him to pieces, and took her with them to the mountains, where they restored her to her parents.”

What we have said of the Turkomans applies also to the Kurds, another nomadic tribe inhabiting the same region: the Kurds, however, come from a different stock to the Turkomans. They are the descendants of the Carduchians, of whom Xenophon speaks so much when they harassed the retreat of “the ten thousand.” They, too, are magnificent horsemen; and we

have watched with admiration the precision with which they can fire their pieces, when at full gallop, as they turn round in their saddles, and discharge them upon an advancing foe.

The first encampment of Kurds we saw was on the Kosan Dagħ in the Taurus range. It consisted of some thirty or forty tents made of goats' hair. In front of the chief's tent a lance was stuck in the ground, from which floated a scarlet flag. The camp seemed to be guarded by dogs of the greyhound species, known in India as Bringauhlis, and are supposed to have come originally from Persia. The horses were picketed with head and heel ropes in a single row in front of the tents, whilst a goodly supply of camels, loaded with the spoils of the last raid, reposed to their right. On our approach several wild-looking Kurds advanced towards us, tossing their matchlocks in the air, and received us with every demonstration of pleasure. Pipes of the most delicious tobacco, with strong coffee, were at once supplied; our horses were cared for; and we had time to note the appearance of our hosts and their surroundings. Linen tunics secured with different colored sashes, and ornamented with

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pistol and yatagan, long striped cloaks, bare feet and legs, with beturbaned heads, seemed to be the usual dress. Their features were decidedly Tartar, with high cheek-bone, receding forehead, glittering black eye, and coal-black hair. We partook of their evening meal, which consisted of pilau with sour curds, mutton stew with onions, honey, cream, and fruits. Large brass basins filled with water were placed near us so that we could continually wash our hands, an operation necessary to be performed where knives and forks are things unknown.

Unlike the Turks, the Turkomans and Kurds are great sportsmen. Hawking is their principal amusement, and magnificently are their birds trained. There is scarcely any currency passed amongst this curious people ; a horse, for instance, being paid for by a number of cows, or two camels, according to his race and worth.

Such, then, is a brief description of these interesting people, who have ever proved faithful in their allegiance to the sultan when the Muscovite has invaded his territory. Nothing could be so congenial to their disposition and feeling as the present Eastern war ; and already Gen. Melikoff

has felt the power of these auxiliaries on his left wing between Bayazid and Lake Van.

Of the Greeks who are scattered broadcast over the western portion of Asia Minor (for few are to be found east of Tokat), there is little to be said beyond the fact, that, with the Armenians, they represent the Christian element in Asia Minor. For a nation who decries absolute power, it is somewhat singular to see the decided leaning, in the present war, towards a Russian policy. The only reason that can be assigned for this is the dilapidated condition of a people, who, from want of means and power, are compelled to fawn upon a nation that is sufficiently powerful to be able to advocate their political desires. But, whatever may be the hopes and aims of European Greeks, the same feelings do not actuate the hearts or minds of Asiatic Greeks, who, although they talk about freedom, are too denationalized to have any part or parcel with their European brethren.

III.

THE WAR IN ASIA MINOR.

BEFORE taking leave of Asia Minor, a short synopsis of the principal events which have taken place in that country since the outbreak of hostilities may prove interesting to the reader.

On the 25th of April in the present year, the conference at Constantinople having failed to achieve any satisfactory settlement of the Eastern question, the czar declared war against Turkey. Simultaneously with the declaration fifty thousand Russian troops crossed the Pruth, and entered the principality of Roumania. On the following day the centre of Gen. Melikoff's army crossed the Turkish frontier in Asia Minor from Alexandropol, and advanced upon Kars ; his right wing moving upon Batoum, whilst his left threatened Bayazid. The first action of any interest took place at Batoum, where the Russians were repulsed, and lost eight hundred men. This was on the 28th.

We have already described the peculiarly

difficult features which the country presents to an invader ; and we can therefore only conclude that the rapid advance of the Russians was unexpected, inasmuch as Mukhtar Pacha, the Turkish commander-in-chief, failed to make good the passes, all of which appear to have been taken by a *coup de main*. Finding himself unable from want of troops to check the advance of the Russians, Mukhtar Pacha wisely retired, leaving a strong garrison in Kars. Failing in his effort upon Batoum, the Russian commander detached a strong division to attack Ardahan. In this he was successful ; and Gen. Melikoff telegraphed the fall of Ardahan to the czar, which threw a fresh light upon the campaign in Asia Minor.

Important as this victory seemed, it did not in reality materially weaken the Turkish position in Asia Minor, for Ardahan is at the present day only a typical fortress of a by-gone age of defence. From the very first it was evident that the policy of Mukhtar Pacha had been to retire his forces into such positions as would give him the benefit of any mistake which the Russian commander-in-chief might make by a too precipitate advance.

The Turkish general knew full well the difficulties which would attend the advance of a Russian army into Asia Minor at that season of the year; and that every mile they could be induced to make that advance into the intricacies of this desolate and difficult country was separating the Russians from their basis, and, what was of more importance, their supplies.

Admitting that Ardahan had fallen, and that the Turkish troops had retired, the Turks still had a very strong position to occupy to the north of Olti, upon the range of mountains running in a south-westerly direction and covering Erzeroum, of which they immediately availed themselves. Meantime, if the Turkish re-enforcements, together with the Circassian levies, arrived at Batoum, where there was no doubt the Russians had met with a decided repulse, instead of the Russians having turned the left flank of the Ottoman army, as Gen. Melikoff wished to convey in his telegram to the czar, his own right flank and rear would be exposed to any advance the Turks made from Batoum, and his communications with Akalzik and Osurgeti would be endangered.

The season of the year when these movements took place was far from favorable to the rapid advance of any troops in this district. The same causes which actuate the Danube induce the numerous streams of this district to overflow. The snow is melting in the high mountain districts, and turns each rivulet into a brawling stream ; and the roads, at their very best the most villanous tracks, render the conveyance of artillery a most tedious and dangerous matter. It is impossible to convey artillery by the aid of horses ; and it requires eight oxen, the means usually employed for such transport, eight hours to drag a gun four miles. From this it will be seen, that, the Russians having taken Ardahan, their position was not much benefited by the achievement, as it left their right wing open to be cut off from the basis of their operations and supplies at Osurgeti and Akalzik. At the commencement of the month of May, the position of the belligerents in Asia Minor stood thus : Gen. Melikoff with his centre was in the neighborhood of Kars, his extreme left resting on Lake Van, and his right on Ardahan ; whilst Mukhtar Pacha had his centre at Bardes, his right on the range of the Alak Dagh

in the neighborhood of Toprak Kaleh, and his left at Olti.

After the fall of Ardahan, on the 20th of May, Roumania declared war, followed a few days later by Servia. This official declaration of war by Roumania against Turkey was an anomalous one. She proposed to act entirely on the defensive. Her position, however, at once showed the impossibility of her carrying out such intentions, if, indeed, she ever had any; besides, the czar was to have his headquarters at Bucharest until the close of the war; and Russian intrigue would hardly be wanting, backed up by persuasive force, to compel the Roumanians to act in concert.

About this time, came the news of a Russian attack upon Kars; but the report had no foundation, inasmuch as the Russian general hardly cared to risk so hazardous an operation, although his idea of the number of troops in that place might be erroneous, and justify him in such an operation. Mukhtar Pacha had thirty thousand troops in Kars, independent of the inhabitants, who number about fifteen thousand. Gen. Melikoff also failed to cut off Mukhtar

Pacha's communications with Kars ; so that the garrison were receiving daily supplies from Trebizond and Ezreroum.

An affair of outpost took place at Ziel, near Sukum-Kaleh, where the Russians received another check. This was perhaps a feint, as they only attacked with fifty-seven hundred men. Then came the news, by way of Paris, that England had determined to protect the Suez Canal, so that commercial navigation might not be impeded. The " Hotspur " was anchored at the entrance of the canal, and two iron-clads were sent to cruise at its mouth.

Whilst the Russians were getting assistance from Servia and Roumania, Turkey was also obtaining allies in the Caucasus and Hungary. The unruly hill-tribes broke into full revolt, and were supplied with arms, while Kossuth wrote a fiery letter, calling upon Hungarians to join with Turkey against their common enemy, Russia. The Russian general seemed now to be fully aware that no time was to be lost before Kars. He ordered up a strong re-enforcement from Bayazid to strengthen his centre ; and took a village which the Turks held, near Kars. On the Turkish side

several thousand Koords arrived in the neighborhood of Lake Van, on their way to join Mukhtar Pacha's right.

The advance guard of the Russian left had arrived at Lake Van a few days previous to the above events ; and they, on the 23d of May, made a demonstration against Kara Kalissa, where the Turks retreated after their abandonment of Bayazid, but without results. Evidently, about this time, the Russian centre was running short of provisions, inasmuch as the Cossacks were scouring the country about Aspachan in search of food and provender. This place was not more than thirty miles from Mukhtar Pacha's headquarters at Bardes, and spoke but little for his watchfulness. On the 25th of May the Circassians who had revolted attacked the Russian outposts, and compelled them to retire ; and Batoum became once more the scene of a severe engagement. The Russians, re-enforced by twenty thousand men, attacked the Turkish works, under the command of the Grand Duke Michael, but were again repulsed.

On the 28th of May the position and attitude of the belligerents may be thus briefly sum-

marized : Since the first corps of fifty thousand Russians crossed the Pruth, their advance upon the Danube had been steady and continuous. When they made this movement, Roumania had not declared her intentions, and Servia was to all appearance neutral, Montenegro alone retaining her position as a belligerent. Since then, Russian intrigue had committed the Roumanians, and then the Servians, to open declaration of war against the sultan, so that Turkey was at that moment encircled on every side, the sea excepted, by a belt of enemies. All this while the Russians had been steadily pouring their troops upon the Danube, and occupied that river from Kalafat on the west, to Ismail on the east. They utilized the railroads only as a means of carrying stores, ammunition, and medical comforts, the troops marching by the ordinary roads. Turkey, on the other hand, although on the spot, had not taken advantage of her opportunities. Instead of making use of the Dobrudscha to cross the Danube in that direction, and so outflank the Russians after they had crossed the Pruth, the Turkish commander-in-chief contented himself with strengthening the fortresses on the Danube,

supplying them with provisions in case of a siege, and wasted a good deal of powder in an artillery duel on the banks of that river.

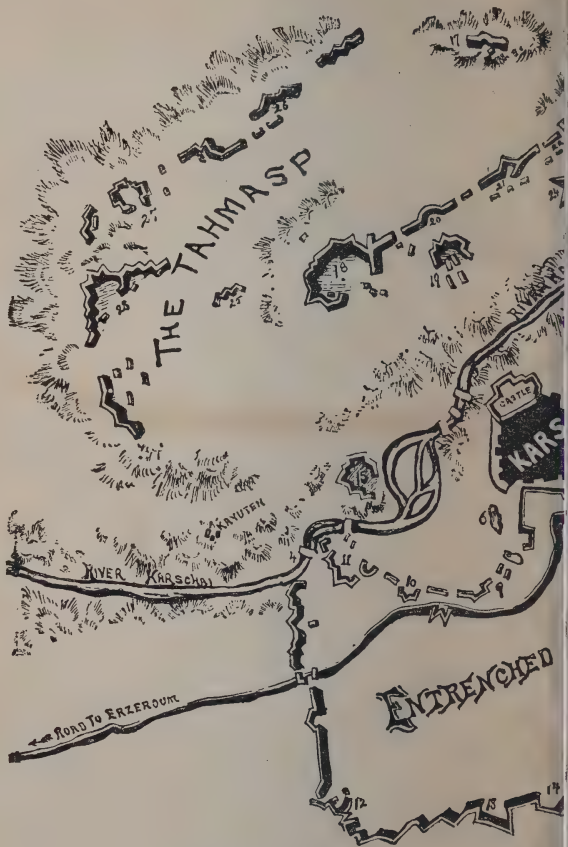
In Asia Minor the case was different: there active operations took place. The Russians were repulsed at Batoum, whilst they had taken Arda-han, occupied Bayazid, made themselves masters of the mountain passes and roads between Akhal-sik and Bayazid, and were now in front of Kars, which they had attacked without success. The Turks had taken Sukum-Kaleh, bombarded Poti, and held Kars and the main roads to Erzeroum and Trebizond. Such, then, was the state of affairs up to the 28th of May. On the 29th the Turks massed sixty thousand infantry and five thousand cavalry at Shumla; but report did not speak favorably of their condition. To garrison Shumla requires at least fifty thousand troops, as the works are of immense extent: these are in excellent condition, and quite ready to stand any operations which may be brought against them. Meantime the Turks had occupied the important defile of Pravady, which is on the Rustchuk and Varna Railroad, and is of the utmost consequence in order to keep up

the communication with the coast. The Servians, on the other hand, occupied the valley of the Timok with twenty thousand men and eighty-four guns, their headquarters being at Negotin, whilst a corps of ten thousand was concentrating at Banji under Gen. Olympics. A chain of sentinels had been established by the Roumanians and Servians within speaking-distance, to watch the Turkish movements from Widin to Sistova.

On the same date, the Russians, the attention of the Turks being drawn off by their attacks upon Batoum, seized the shortest route to Erzeroum, which Mukhtar Pacha had left unprotected. This trap Mukhtar Pacha seems to have fallen into very easily, although he had troops enough at his command to have detached a sufficiency to hold so important a post. He had at his disposal, without counting the troops at Batoum or northward, 146,000 men; viz., 70,000 in and around Kars, and 76,000 before Erzeroum. This route runs through the Kara-Valley pass, and a glance at the map will show its importance. The main road from Batoum runs along the river Tcharuk, through Artvin to Olti, and from thence to Bardez. The Russians then advanced upon

Olti, and outflanked Mukhtar Pacha, who fell back upon Hasan-Kaleh, close to Erzeroum, where there is a strong position. By this movement, the Russians not only imperilled Erzeroum, but also Kars; for both are dependent for supplies from that direction. The Russian troops were thus disposed: 50,000 men and 156 guns, under Gen. Terguadoff, in the neighborhood of Olti; 80,000 and 240 guns, with Gen. Melikoff, about Kars; and 45,000, with 140 guns, under Gen. Okolijio, at Van and in that neighborhood.

At Kars the Russians were not inactive. On the 23d inst. they opened a heavy fire upon the Karadagh and Tahmasp, two of the principal fortifications of Kars. It would appear that the fire was hotly kept up all day on both sides, the Krupp guns mounted upon these works by the Turks replying vigorously and effectively. On the 24th the Russians made two assaults, which were repulsed, with what loss is not yet ascertained. So far, and indeed up to this moment, the Turks maintain the key of their Asiatic position; and the strong works which protect this bulwark of Asiatic Turkey have withstood the



MAP OF THE FORTIFICATIONS OF KARS, FROM

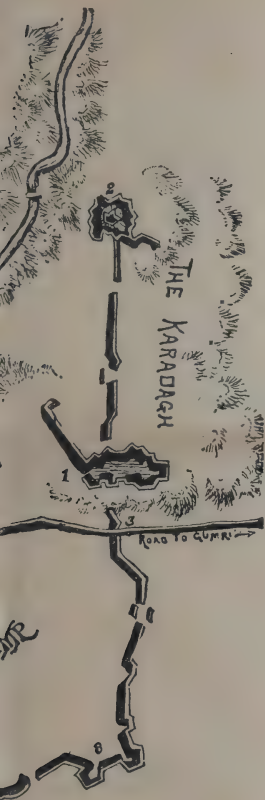


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REFERENCES.

1. Karadagh battery.
2. Arab tabia.
3. Koltak tabia.
4. Bridge.
5. Toli tabia.
6. Suburb.
7. Challak tabia.
8. Hafiz Pacha tabia.
9. Chicheck tabia.
10. Yussuf Pacha tabia.
11. Telek tabia.
12. Kanti tabia.
13. Fizi Bey tabia.
14. Yeni tabia.
15. Tehim tabia.
16. Village of Tchakmak.
17. Telek tabia.
18. Takes tabia.
19. Williams Pacha tabia.
20. Churchill's tabia.
21. Zorabs tabia.
22. Thompson's tabia.
23. Teesdale's tabia.
24. Sandwith tabia.
25. Laz tabia.
26. Tahmasp tabia.

invader. Evidently Mukhtar Pacha anticipated such an assault ; for he, simultaneously with the Russian attack upon Kars, made a flank movement upon Izakir-Babada, which speaks much in favor of his strategic abilities. This movement would compel the Russian general to vigorous and decided measures. Either Kars must be invested or carried by assault, or Batoum must be taken. If the latter, then Gen. Melikoff would be able to spare sufficient men to invest Kars and commence a regular siege, advancing with the rest of his troops upon Erzeroum ; but, should he fail at Batoum, Mukhtar Pacha, who was concentrating his troops at Bardes, in front of Erzeroum, would be in a position to take the offensive.

Whilst these operations were going on in Asia Minor, the Turks, assisted by the Circassians in revolt, advanced from Sukum-Kaleh in the Caucasus upon the towns and villages of Mingrelia, causing some little diversion in favor of Mukhtar Pacha, whose position at this date was supposed to be highly critical. Meantime the Turkish fleet rendered but little assistance or co-operation, although they might have done much.

Upon the outbreak of the Eastern war, there was a great flourish of trumpets about the Turkish navy. It was urged by many, that the superiority of Russia on land would to some extent be counterbalanced by the advantage Turkey possessed in her fleet. But since the declaration of war in the early part of April, up to the 30th of June, no record can be made of any material advantages that Turkey secured to herself by the possession of this fleet. On the contrary, it would seem that the same slothful indolence has actuated the movements of the navy that has been observed in the manipulation of the land forces. We heard that one small Russian steamer had been destroyed, that the Black-Sea squadron had bombarded Poti, Sukum-Kaleh, Adler, and various small places on the Caucasian coast ; but, beyond this, Turkish iron-clads have done nothing. They were even so careless as to permit the Russian steamer "Constantine" to steal out of the port of Sebastopol, and, with two smaller craft, make an attempt to lay torpedoes off Batoum. The Turkish admiral saw this small squadron, and opened fire upon them, thereby frustrating their enterprise ; but he failed to give chase,

although six powerful iron-clads constituted the Turkish squadron in these waters. We are naturally inclined to ask the question, "Where was and is Hobart Pacha?" There is no doubt that the torpedo system opens up a new era in maritime warfare. Up to the present moment the practical use of this weapon has proved entirely successful. It has also raised a question, which must shortly be decided, as to the responsibility of a belligerent government for neutral vessels destroyed by such means.

The Russian commander of Odessa, no doubt under instructions from St. Petersburg, issued a proclamation relative to this point. It said that neutral merchant vessels would be permitted to leave the port of Odessa under charge of a Russian captain and crew, who would take them through the channels where the torpedoes were not laid. But the crew were to be below hatches, and on no account to attempt to discover the course the vessel was steering. Moreover, the enemy were to retire out of sight of land until these vessels were clear, in order that they might not become acquainted with the spots that were free from torpedoes. This sounds all very nice ;

but, in the event of the enemy declining to conform with the last clause, what is to be the fate of the neutral vessels in Russian ports, blockaded by the Turkish fleet?

Up to the 5th of June, little took place of interest beyond the continued retrograde movements of Mukhtar Pacha, and the close investment of Kars. The same sort of inactivity marked the state of affairs on the Danube ; but the apparent delay on the part of the Russians in crossing that river is explained from these causes : first, from an insufficiency of troops ; secondly, from the flooded state of the river ; and thirdly, because, were the first and second objections removed, it was absolutely necessary to possess proper roads for the movements of artillery and a pontoon train. The communications which, as a matter of fact, are available for an invading army, are the following : In the first place, there is the Roumanian Railway (a single line, with sidings for shunting about every sixteen miles), from Galatz through Bucharest to Giurgevo, opposite Rustchuk, with a branch from Bucharest, parallel to the Danube, to Tschernetz, opposite Kladovo. From this latter line there are

good practicable roads from Tschernetz and Krajova to Kalafat, from Krajova and Slatina through Karakal to Islatz opposite Nikopolis, from Piteschi through Tekutschi to Turna, also opposite Nikopolis. From Turna, also, a road runs parallel to the Danube through Siemnitza to Giurgevo; and this latter road is joined by another coming from Ruche de Wede by way of Aleksandria. From Bucharest, again, there is a good road to Oltenitza, opposite Turtukai. Three roads — which, however, are only practicable in dry weather — run from Ibrail and Bucharest to Kalarasch, opposite Silistria. On the north of the Dobrudscha, roads lead to Reni, Tuschkoff, and Kilia; and there is also communication between Reni and Galatz. Some of these roads are, however, made unfit at certain times of the year for transport purposes, not only from the rising of the river, but also from heavy rains. It is therefore not surprising that the Russian army was so long delayed.

In the early part of the month of June, whilst the news from both the Danube and Asia Minor was scant, there came the intelligence of a scheme which shows with what pertinacity the

Russians adhere to their projects of conquest and annexation.

Ever since Gen. Kauffmann's expedition to Khiva, and the reduction of that khanate to the Russian rule, the scheme of an Asiatic railway, connecting Moscow with Russia's Asiatic possessions, has never been abandoned. On the contrary, the greatest activity has been displayed in its development. M. Clarigny, in the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*," endeavors to make this scheme an apparently feasible one ; but, when we come to consider the vast steppes and arid deserts which such a route would necessarily have to pass through, we must of necessity take objection to its immediate practicability. When we

* say immediate, we of course mean within the ordinary time such a length of line could, under favorable circumstances, be completed. The engineering feat of such an enterprise ought alone to command serious attention, to say nothing of the enormous capital required for its development ; and yet, in the face of the Turkish war, we find Russia turning her serious attention to this gigantic scheme. The inference to be drawn from such a fact is the apparent desire of Russia

to facilitate her communications with Asia by every means in her power. Nor can we, taking a retrospective view, think otherwise. The road from Khiva to Kashgar is eleven hundred miles; which, in these high-pressure times, is, after all, no great distance. The Caspian and the Sea of Aral are in the hands of the Russians, so to speak. Persia is but a vacillating, unreliable power, and Afghanistan requires only a little ferment to set alight the torch of war. What then? Should all this be so, and Melikoff succeed in clearing the poor barrier which Turkey provides in Asia out of Russia's path, it would seem that the road to British India is apparently macadamized.

Towards the middle of the month, more reliable news reached us from Asia Minor, apparently showing that Mukhtar Pacha had allowed himself to be outmanœuvred and outmarched by Gen. Melikoff.

He had abandoned the strong position on the Soghanle range, leaving a handful of men in the small fortress of Zevin. He had permitted the Russians to interpose between him and his left wing, by their occupation of Olti, whilst his right

had, for no apparent reason, left Toprak-Kaleh, and retreated on Delibabi by a mountainous road across the Gedik Dagh. But according to this arrangement, Mukhtar Pacha could, if he pleased, concentrate his right wing and centre, by a day's march, at Kopra Koi, and, should he see the opportunity, attack the Russian centre ; whilst, by making a feint upon Olti with his left, he could draw off the attention of the Russian right. This he afterwards carried out, though in a different manner. It seemed, however, hardly probable that he would risk attacking so strong a position as that of Soghanle, especially as he was said to be deficient in artillery. All this time the Russians were moving up slowly from Van in a north-westerly direction. Meantime the Turkish ambassador at Paris denied the precarious position of the army, or that Kars was invested ; but, if such were not the case, people asked themselves the question why did not the Kars garrison fall upon the rear of the Russian centre, or cut them off from their supplies ?

Thus matters went on for some few days : Mukhtar Pacha waiting patiently at Hasan-Kaleh and in the neighborhood of Zevin ; Melikoff occu-

pied with Kars, from which place several sorties had been made, but with little advantage ; the Russian left wing slowly creeping along towards Kara Kalissa, their flank continually threatened by troops of Kurdish and Turkoman cavalry, and the army of the Caucasus occupied with the reduction of Batoum. On the 22d, the Russians, under cover of a heavy fire from their batteries, advanced to a third attack upon Batoum in two heavy columns. The fight was a severe one, but the Russians were repulsed with loss, leaving a large number of dead and wounded on the field.

A day or two previous to this, Mukhtar Pacha had received some re-enforcements by way of Trebizond ; and, hearing of the slow advance and evident helplessness of the Russian left wing entangled in the intricacies of the Kosh Dag, he determined upon a course of action which has since proved entirely successful. Telegraphing to his left wing to advance towards Ardahan, so as to engage the attention of the Russian right, and leaving a few troops at Zevin, he united his force with that of his right wing under Faik Pacha, and threw himself with violence

upon the Russians at Delibabi, to which place they had advanced. The conflict was long and sanguinary ; but the Turks were not to be denied, and drove the Russians from their positions, following them with cries of "Allah, Allah!" along the road to Toprak-Kaleh. Their retreat did not stop here ; for it appears Gen. Turgukassoff has been compelled to retreat to the frontier in order to save Bayazid.

Mukhtar Pacha, having routed the Russian left wing, sent Faik Pacha in pursuit, and immediately returned with his victorious army to Zevin. This movement placed him on the flank of Gen. Melikoff, whose rear was also threatened. Accordingly on the first of July, Melikoff, finding himself in a trap, boldly attacked Mukhtar Pacha at Zevin. It was a risky movement, and one that placed the success of the Russians in Asia Minor upon the throw of a die. As it proves, he has lost that throw, and the last accounts say Melikoff is to be recalled. At Zevin he was repulsed with heavy loss, and compelled to retreat upon Kars ; Mukhtar Pacha following his advantage up with the intention, no doubt, of raising the siege of Kars. These disasters have

compelled the Russians to raise the siege of Batoum; abandon Ardahan and Bayazid, and relinquish the siege of Kars, so that they may be said to have lost all that they had gained.

This short sketch brings us up to the fifth day of July; and, from the facts, we may infer that any Russian successes in Asia Minor are not only far from confirmed, but highly problematical, inasmuch as it is officially admitted by them that the campaign in Asia Minor has been a failure.

On the Danube it resolves itself to a mere question of time, for the preponderance of numbers must tell in the end; but in Asia Minor those numbers are not of such importance, at least in Armenia. Ten thousand men who are resolute, and know the country, are as good as twenty thousand; whilst the co-operation of the Kurds and Turkomans, who, it is said, have almost annihilated the Cossacks, is invaluable.

The important question at present before us is the position which England may take in the matter; for upon her decision the fate of Turkey must assuredly hang. We have had a good deal of maudlin sentimentality of late about Turkish atrocities, which have been aired to their very

fullest extent, and made the most of by Mr. Gladstone. We have been told by Russia that her object is a crusade of the cross; whilst the other nations of Europe are presented to us as spectators looking on with anxiety, and doing nothing to avert the crisis which must eventually come. Then comes a series of adventurous *on dits* as to Russian policy should mediation be resorted to, which are repeated and repeated to such an extent that they gain credence; and now at last we are told that Count Schouvaloff, in his answer to Lord Derby, has vouchsafed certain special assurances concerning Constantinople. Now, if we review the matter calmly, we shall perceive, that, of the nations of Europe, England alone has conscientiously done her best to avert this war. The other governments are really in such a supreme state of anarchy, because they each and every one want to know what is to be their future, — whether there is not, in fact, going to be a re-distribution of power in Europe which may heavily affect their *locus standi*, — that they have no time to consider what weight they can bring to bear towards establishing peace in Europe. We might therefore venture to remark,

that confusion amongst the governments of Europe is far more likely to have been the primary cause of the war than the Turkish atrocities ; and that the intervention of England is alone likely to save further bloodshed, and conclude peace upon a proper footing.

IV.

THE CAUCASUS.

NOT one of the least interesting countries which the Eastern war has brought into notice, is the Caucasus. It bears the same relation to Asia Minor, that Montenegro does to Asiatic Turkey : that is to say, this mountainous region has never been conquered ; and, although Russia pretends to its possession, her real sway goes no farther than the plains of Immertia, Mingrelia, and Georgia. At the present moment, the greater portion of the hill-tribes of the Caucasus have declared for the sultan, and are up in arms against Russia ; it is equally true, that, if they are not very fond of the Turks, they cordially detest the Russians.

It was in this mountainous region that Schamyl, the hero of the Caucasus, so long waged a successful war against Russia ; and it is this district that has now become the scene of rapine, plunder, and bloodshed. In times of peace, travelling in the

Caucasus is far from agreeable ; for the stranger is liable at any moment to be stopped and robbed, specially if he has the temerity to travel after dark.

Popular language gives the name of Circassians to all the tribes of the Caucasus, and speaks of them as one people. This is not so. Some are Christians, and some Mohammedans ; some are subject to the sacerdotal rule of prophet-warriors, while others are republican mountaineers ; some have yielded to the temptation of Russian bribes ; whilst others, and this the largest part, have wholly resisted that temptation ; and the relations between the several tribes are in many cases far from friendly. Turkey has never expressed any great desire to become possessed of the Caucasus ; and, were she even to do so, the form of government proposed by the Porte would not be conducive to the peace and tranquillity of the district. At the present moment the inhabitants of Daghestan, the province which gave birth to the heroic Schamyl, are, and always have been, at war with Russia. The other hill-tribes of the Caucasus inhabit districts over which there is no fixed government ; and consequently there is great

difficulty in treating with them. Each chief is something like a Highland laird of the olden time ; in his own territory he is independent of all control, and acknowledges no superior ; but their aversion to all military control, even under the all-powerful and beloved Schamyl, makes them doubtful allies when removed from their mountain homes.

The principal tribes that inhabit the Caucasus are the Circassians, who occupy that portion of mountain country south and west of the sources of the river Kuban, — plateau and gorges between the rugged peaks, scarcely accessible to any but mountaineers ; and the Lesghians, who dwell principally among those mountains situated east and south of the source of the Terek. As the Kuban rises near the foot of Mount Elbruz, and the Terek near that of the Kasbek, these two mountains may conveniently mark the limits of the respective countries of the two tribes. The whole country from the Kasbek to the Caspian is often called Daghestan ; and it is here that the main struggles have been carried on between Russia and the mountaineers. The portion of Daghestan under the more immediate control of

the Lesghians is described as being flanked on the north with dense forests of magnificent beeches ; twining creepers bind the trees together ; and vast boulders stripped by thousands of winters from the granite and porphyry of the upper ranges, and borne along by the fierce mountain torrents to the valleys and passes which form their beds, afford every advantage to the lightly equipped mountaineer, — every obstacle to an invading force. The interior of the country is yet more formidable : it is one mass of ridges and ravines, at the bottom of each of which a brawling stream, fed by the snows and rivers of the upper regions, rushes down to the rivers Soundga, Argoung, or Soulak.

The Circassians, of whom there are sub-tribes, — the Adigeh, the Ubigeh, and others, — are Mohammedans, with a small admixture of Christianity. Next to them are the Abasians, more zealous Mohammedans, who are now in open revolt ; next, the Ossetes or Ossetians, a small portion of whom are Christians ; these the czars began, on this account, to *protect*, and brought the priests into their pay ; whilst to the eastward are the Tchetchenes and Swannetys,

all fierce believers in Islam. Against this country the czars have sent the following generals: Yermeloff, Paskewich, Gortschakoff, the two Villiaminoffs, Rosen, Rajewski, Aurep, Galovine, Grabbe, and Woronzoff; but all have failed in subduing the bold mountaineers. Even in time of peace, Russia has to maintain an army in Georgia and Mingrelia of 85,000 men; and, according to her own returns, 10,000 of these are swept off yearly by disease or warfare. The population of the Caucasus is 1,500,000 souls; but only 20,000 fighting men are ever available at one spot at a given time.

The Caucasus has two lines of seacoast,—one from Anapa on the Black Sea down to Poti, a Russian port and fortress immediately north of Batoum; the other from the Kouma River to the Saljan on the Caspian. It is worthy of remark, that, with but two or three exceptions, the Russians only hold their own on the Black-Sea coast by sheer force of arms. These exceptions are due to Russian bribery and Russian promises, the remaining chieftains universally detesting the Muscovite. The Russians are, however, masters of Georgia, Mingrelia, and Immertia, which part

of the country was ceded to the czar in the year 1799 by George the Twelfth, the last king of Georgia. His subjects were highly indignant at this act; none more so than the queen, who drew a dagger, stabbed the Russian officer sent to convey her to Russia, and slew him on the spot. The younger brother of the king then organized a rebellion; but, receiving no help either from Persia or Turkey, he was easily defeated by the Russians, and fled for protection to the safety of the mountains. The czar then issued the following truly Russian proclamation:—

“Ce n'est pas pour accroître nos forces, ce n'est pas dans des vues d'intérêt, où pour étendre les limites d'un empire déjà si vaste, que nous acceptons le fardeau du trône de Géorgie; le sentiment de notre dignité, l'honneur, l'humanité, seuls nous ont imposé le devoir sacré de ne pas résister aux cris de souffrance partis de votre sein, détourner de vos têtes les maux qui vous affligent, et d'introduire en Géorgie un gouvernement fort, capable d'administrer la justice avec équité, de protéger la vie et les biens de chacun, et d'étendre sur tous l'égide de la loi.”

Ever since that period the Russians have always had to fight for their occupation, especially in Daghestan ; and have been compelled to turn every town or city of any importance into a fortress. On the Black Sea alone the following places are more or less fortified : Anapa, Movorossisk, Gelendolik, Tenginsk, Lazareffsky, Golovinsky, Wardan, Ducha, Gogri, Adler, Sukum-Kaleh (now in possession of the Turks), Dranda, Illori, Poti, St. Nicolais, and Safa Sepa.

There are two lines of railroad in the Caucasus : one joining Poti with Tiflis, the principal city of Caucasia, and the ancient capital of Georgia ; the other, coming down from Rostov at the head of the Sea of Azov, and traversing the centre of the country, joins Tiflis with Southern Russia. The railway from Poti to Tiflis was made by British engineers, and was the result of British enterprise. The travelling, as on most Russian railways, is wretchedly slow ; but these lines are at this moment of the greatest importance ; so much so that it has been a wonder why the Turks have not endeavored to possess themselves of or at least destroy the communication on the Poti railroad, inasmuch as it would

compel the Russians to victual their troops in a far less satisfactory and expeditious manner than they are now doing.

As we have already remarked, the peculiar features of this marvellous configuration of nature, forming the range of the Caucasus, render the subjection of any of the mountainous parts of the country almost an impossibility. There are really only two roads by which this backbone of the isthmus can be crossed, and only one of these is available at all times of the year. The pass through which the available road runs is called the pass of Dariel. It is nearly in the centre of the chain, and joins Tiflis with Mosdok and Kislar ; the latter a town upon the Terek, and close to where that river empties itself into the Caspian Sea. The pass of Dariel may therefore be said to join the coast of the Caspian with that of the Black Sea. There is a strong fortification perched upon a precipitous rock which commands this pass, and it is garrisoned by a small body of Russians ; whilst close to it are the ruins of the original castle of Dariel, a very ancient place, dating back as far as the year A.D. 103.

About this ruin there is a legend of the

country, from which story it is believed it derives its name. It appears there was a very beautiful princess, whose name was Dary-ya, who was at one time owner of the castle. Her charms were so great, that many noble and valiant men used to come to Dariel for the purpose of endeavoring to ingratiate themselves into the good graces of the lovely *châtelaine*. She was, however, as fickle as she was beautiful, and became no sooner possessed of a husband, than she got tired of him, and forthwith set about getting rid of him by the most expeditious means. This consisted in throwing him over the battlement into the river Terek, which flows at its base. She would then proceed by stratagem to obtain another, until at length she had exhausted thirteen, all of whom shared a like fate, with the exception of the last, who turned the tables by throwing her over instead.

The climate of the Caucasus is much the same as that of Asia Minor ; the winters being extremely rigorous, and the summers short but very fervent. Many hundreds of years ago, the Caucasus was supposed to be one of the most densely populated portions of the world.

It was said that no less than seventy different tribes were to be found there. This, no doubt, accounts for the various denominations, or rather races, that go to form the population of the Caucasus of to-day. We find the presence of the Tartar, the Persian, the Osmanli, the Arab, and the Cossack, amongst them; which also accounts for the diversity of religion, language, manners, and customs. It is extremely difficult to get much information respecting these tribes. In the first place, it is dangerous to visit them, as they are, with the exception of the Circassians, most inveterate thieves; and, secondly, from their dislike to strangers, whom they have a habit of quietly putting out of the way upon the slightest pretext. Unfortunately the limits of this book will only permit a somewhat hurried glance, giving their peculiarities, manners of life, and the country they inhabit.

Landing at Poti, the terminus of the Tiflis railway, we find ourselves in a very insignificant seaport. It is, however, one of the principal towns of the province of Gouria, of which Ozurgeti, now a strongly fortified place, is the capital. The Gouriels, or a portion of the inhabitants of

Georgia, are a mild, inoffensive class ; that is to say, the peasants. Their principal occupation is agriculture, in which they take a great interest. As you approach a body of laborers (men and women), working in a field, your ears will be saluted with the most hideous cries, which are explained by the fact that as they work so they shout, and that without these shouts they cannot work. Ozurgeti, the principal town of this section, was in former days the seat of the kings of Gouria. It is a wretched place, consisting of one long street, and is only relieved from positive ugliness by the splendor, both in quantity and color, of the vegetation that surrounds it. The men in this part of the country wear short cloth jackets trimmed with lace, and trousers which fit close to the ankles ; round their waist a thick sash of various colors is wound, in which the handles of two or three pistols and a dagger are generally to be seen.

The women are certainly not very handsome ; but they possess when young the most magnificent figures, which are shown off to advantage by the cotton shirt which they wear : this is drawn into the waist as tightly as possible, so that none

of the symmetry of the upper portion of the figure should be lost. Next to the Gourias come the Immertians, whose principal town is Kutaïs, on the Poti and Tiflis Railroad. The province of Immertia was conquered by Gen. Todleben in 1769 ; and the inhabitants have since then been under Russian rule. They, like the Gourias, are peaceably inclined ; and the district is much more cultivated. It produces grapes in considerable quantities, although the wine which is made from them is not calculated to suit a stranger's palate. Gold has been found in the valley of the Ingour ; and, so late as three years ago, some small nuggets were brought to Tiflis, which were found at the head-waters of that river. The first thing that strikes the traveller is the peculiarity in the dress of the upper classes of the Immertians. When the Turks conquered the province, they named the Immertians "*Bare heads.*" This is in consequence of their never wearing any covering to their heads, with the exception of a small square piece of silk or cloth, which is richly embroidered, and is fastened under the chin by strings. This curious headdress is called the *Papanaky*. The lower orders seldom wear any thing, probably

because nature has gifted them with enormous heads of hair. The costume of the better class consists of a long-skirted coat, with the inevitable "*K'hazyä*," or cartridge-tubes, upon each breast. The coat is fastened at the waist by a broad belt, which is often richly embroidered ; and they wear sandals on their feet. The laboring classes wear a long sort of blouse of brown or gray home-spun, with short trousers to their knees. The women of Immertia are as pretty as those of Gouria are bad-looking. Their code of morality is not quite as strict as it ought to be : this may perhaps arise from the pernicious system of early marriages, which usually take place at the age of twelve or thirteen.

The Georgians are the flower of the southern Caucasus, as the Circassians are those of the north and east. We conclude that this impression was made from the fact, that, after travelling through Gouria and Immertia, the more refined and cultivated manners of the Georgians stood out in bold relief to that of their less fortunate neighbors. This is, no doubt, on account of Russian influence and example, together with the system of education which the Russians have in-

troduced, and from which the generation of the present day have wisely profited. Tiflis, the capital, in fact the principal city of the Caucasus, is handsomely built upon the river Kur. It is the seat of government, and the residence of the governor-general of the Caucasus, who is now the Grand Duke Michael. The fortifications of Tiflis in 1846 are thus described by Evliya Effen-di, a Turkish gentleman, and is interesting as a specimen of Turkish literature:—

“The fortress consists of two castles opposite each other on the banks of the Kur, which separates the rocks on which they stand, and which are connected above by a bridge leading from one castle to another. The great castle is on the south side of the Kur, and the lesser on the north. The circumference of the largest castle is 6,000 paces, the walls 60 cubits high, with 70 bulwarks and 3,000 battlements, but no ditch. The water-tower, which supplies water to the garrison in time of siege, is situated on the Kur. In the castle are 600 houses, terraced, some with and some without gardens, the palace of the khan, a mosque, and a bath. The small castle was built by Yezdejerd Shah. It is of stone in

a square form, with only one gate at the head of the bridge, and has no Bezestan or Tmaret. Three thousand watchmen light fires every night, and continually cry, '*Khoda khob*' ('All's well')."

It is needless to say, that, although these fortifications still exist, the place has been strengthened and re-fortified by the Russians.

The streets of Tiflis are very narrow, without any sidewalks. They are usually crammed with a bustling, jolting, pushing crowd of men, women, camels, and horses, all striving to get along as quickly as possible. The bazaars are interesting and well supplied, and there is excellent shooting in the neighborhood. The religion of Georgia is, with very few exceptions, the same as that of Russia.

The Ossets, a tribe who have established themselves on the banks of the river Soundja, about ten miles from Vladykavkaz, are not, as is generally supposed, all Christians. They number amongst them not only Mohammedans, but also Pagans. They are a clean, industrious, and well-behaved race, whose principal occupation is the rearing of cattle, with a little agriculture. Unlike most Asiatic residences, their houses are

furnished with chairs, tables, and sofas. The Osset women never appear in public until they are advanced in age, especially before strangers. Their dress is much the same as the women of Immertia, and the men that of the Circassians. Every house brews its own beer, which is exceeding good and wholesome, and not at all unlike Dublin porter. The Ossets are by no means a fine-looking race. They are short, with fair hair and blue eyes, whilst their women are excessively plain.

The Swannys are another of the hill-tribes of the Caucasus, and, next to the Abasians of the coast, are the most unruly and unreliable of those whom Russia is pleased to call her Caucasian subjects. This tribe is to be found in the upper valley of the Ingour, and is divided into two parts; viz., Swannety Dadian, and Independent Swannety. They have many superstitions, amongst which that of placing skulls upon their habitations is most noticeable. Even in times of peace, murder and theft are every-day occurrences in the Swannety country; the murder being easily commuted for a sum of six hundred roubles, the price at which a human life is

estimated. Of agriculture there is next to none, all the tillage that is done being for the immediate wants of the family. A few cattle are raised, but that is all. They are never mounted, because there are no horses to be found in this inaccessible country. They live more upon the chase, and are excellent sportsmen, supplying themselves with fish, bear-meat, partridges, wild boars, &c. Very little is known of this country, in consequence of the extreme objection which the Swannys have to the presence of strangers, and the facility with which they can prevent any visits being paid to them. Of the Mingrelins there is little to be said beyond that they are an improvident race, and prefer a life of pleasure and ease to that of industry or adventure. The women of Mingrelia are excessively handsome; in fact, the whole race, both men and women, are the handsomest in the Caucasus. The distinction between classes is very evident in Mingrelia. The nobles, or gentry, for the most part appear to be well off; but the peasantry are ignorant and dirty, and their garments present nothing but a bundle of rags. The soil is excessively fertile, but is not cultivated, Nature performing the part of hus-

bandman : it produces pomegranates, grapes, nuts, almonds, &c., all of which ripen in wild luxuriance upon the plains.

The limited space at our command will not permit us to describe the Abasians and other mountain tribes ; whilst so much has been written upon Circassia, that the reader is, no doubt, well posted upon this ancient and handsome race. In these few pages we have endeavored to give the reader a superficial idea of the country, at this moment one of the most interesting in the world. In doing so, we are aware of the many shortcomings which these pages exhibit, and of the want of detail to which space has compelled us. Still we trust that our endeavor may not be without results, even should it only excite a desire in the hearts of the citizens of the United States, — who as travellers and explorers are second to none in the world, — to prosecute their researches in a country where they will find much food for the mind, many extraordinary relics of the bygone days of early Christianity, and the most magnificent scenery in the world.

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